

HIV, has increased through the duration of public health emergency due to the COVID-19 relief bills, tightening State budgets amid record Medicaid enrollment could hinder access to treatment or care for the HIV/AIDS population. Forty-two percent of adults with HIV receive healthcare under Medicaid.

In the U.S., the fight against this disease also disproportionately affects communities of color, with Black and Latino Americans accounting for a disproportionate share of new HIV diagnoses and deaths, consisting of about 70 percent of new diagnosis despite making up roughly 30 percent of the U.S. population. The Biden-Harris administration's theme for World AIDS Day this year is "Ending the HIV Epidemic: Equitable Access, Everyone's Voice," denoting a strong commitment to addressing health inequities within the epidemic. I share the administration's determination to address the disproportionate impact of the epidemic on marginalized populations like the LGBTQ+ community and racial and ethnic minorities.

Internationally, the U.S. has invested more than \$100 billion in the global HIV/AIDS response through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief—PEPFAR—and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Global Fund. This investment has saved more than 20 million lives, prevented millions of people from becoming infected, and achieved HIV/AIDS epidemic control in more than 50 countries. Since 2003, PEPFAR has changed the trajectory of the HIV epidemic around the globe by expanding access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care interventions. PEPFAR is one of the most successful and cost-effective efforts in the history of American foreign assistance.

Despite the progress we have made around the globe, there is still significant work to do. Of the 38 million people globally living with HIV, 12.6 million are not accessing lifesaving treatment. In 2019, there were 1.7 million people newly infected with HIV—more than three times the global target—and 690,000 people perished from this terrible disease. While we have made strides in combating HIV/AIDS in eastern and southern Africa, we have seen increases in new infections in Eastern Europe, central Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.

As with last year's commemoration, this year's World AIDS Day finds us continuing to battle the COVID-19 pandemic. Support through PEPFAR and the Global Fund has financed efforts to minimize the disruption of the pandemic on HIV epidemic response efforts, through services like telehealth and multimonth dispensing of antiretroviral therapies. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, continues to affect the global response to HIV and threatens the decades of progress we have made against this disease. In addition to disrupting HIV treatments and pre-

vention services, downstream impacts of the pandemic have cut off vulnerable populations from educational and social support services, and growing inequalities resulting from the economic downturn are likely to lead to increases in HIV risk behaviors and vulnerability. The Global Fund reported that last year, HIV testing dropped by 22 percent and the percentage of HIV-positive TB patients on antiretroviral therapies dropped 16 percent.

A world free from HIV requires global leadership from the United States, and we have stepped up to the plate by heavily investing in the global response to HIV. From significant contributions to the Global Fund to the creation of PEPFAR, U.S. global health leadership and international collaboration helped to turn the tide on the global epidemic. This is as true today as it was 33 years ago. International public health crises require international responses. Unlike the previous administration, I support President Biden's actions to reprioritize cooperative global health response efforts. We are only as strong as the weakest health system, and it is incumbent upon the U.S. to lead global health response efforts as we look to end the COVID-19 pandemic and HIV/AIDS epidemic.

One of the biggest tragedies of the HIV epidemic is that millions of people around the world died while waiting for treatment, and once treatment became available in 1987, it was out-of-reach. At about \$8,000 a year—more than \$17,000 in today's dollars—the first HIV drug was too expensive for populations who needed it most: low-income communities in the U.S. and low and middle-income countries. While Congress authorized \$30 million in emergency funding to States to pay for low-income patients' treatment, global access to the drug lagged. For example, when we established PEPFAR in 2003, only 50,000 people in Africa were accessing lifesaving HIV treatment.

We cannot make the same mistake with COVID-19. While we have made great strides domestically to vaccinate our population, it is equally important to vaccinate the rest of the world from COVID-19. The Biden administration has made significant strides to supply and commit future supplies of vaccines to low-income countries, and I implore the administration to continue working with vaccine manufacturers to expedite this effort as fast as humanly and safely possible. Equally important is ensuring access, when approved, to antiviral treatments. One potential antiviral treatment reduces the risk of hospitalization and death by 89 percent in high-risk adults when used in conjunction with ritonavir, a medication commonly used to treat HIV. The potential success of this antiviral treatment is a testament to the biomedical infrastructure of the United States, where the incredibly innovative treatments we developed for HIV may be effective in battling the COVID-19 pandemic, too.

COVID-19 does not respect borders. To protect our domestic health, we must ensure that our allies and low and middle-income countries around the world have affordable access to eventually approved COVID-19 vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics. While we celebrate the progress we have made with respect to HIV/AIDS this World AIDS Day, we must recommit ourselves to continuing this fight because success is within our grasp.

We have made so much progress through international partnerships. Donor nations; civil society; people living with HIV; faith-based organizations; scientific research community and academic partners such as Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland, and the Walter Reed Army Institute of Infectious Disease Research; the private sector; foundations; and implementing organizations such as Catholic Relief Services and Lutheran World Relief have complemented those partnerships tremendously. We must apply the lessons of the fight against HIV to our current battle against the COVID-19 pandemic so we can save more lives and get the global economy back on track.

#### TRIBUTE TO ROBIN SQUATRITO

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I rise today to honor a devoted American patriot on her retirement from Federal civil service. Mrs. Robin Squatrito has served as the Director of Legislative Affairs for North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command in Colorado Springs, CO, for over 15 years. During that time, she has provided expert legislative advice to nine NORAD and USNORTHCOM commanders, served as the principal liaison between the commands and the congressional defense committee staffs, and facilitated a tremendous collaborative relationship between NORAD, USNORTHCOM, and Congress—including my staff and me—as the commands have stood constant watch over the United States and Canadian homelands.

In fact, Robin was a member of USNORTHCOM from the day the command was established in October 2002. At that time, she was serving our Nation as a colonel in the U.S. Air Force and was hand-selected by the first commander of USNORTHCOM, Gen. Ralph Eberhart, to be the Director of his Commander's Action Group. USNORTHCOM was established in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, and Colonel Squatrito played an instrumental role in ensuring the command was organized and ready to safeguard our homeland from further attacks. When she retired after 26 years in uniform, it was only a matter of time before she answered the call to serve once more.

From the day Robin returned to NORAD and USNORTHCOM as a civil servant, she has been a tireless advocate for our national defense. She is

well known inside and outside the headquarters as a passionate advocate for NORAD and USNORTHCOM, as well as for the men and women responsible for executing their critical missions. She is also recognized for her knowledge, remarkable attention to detail, and dedication, spending whatever time is necessary to make certain that every product that passes across her desk is as close to perfect as possible. Robin has repeatedly demonstrated her passion for doing the right thing and her commitment to high standards as she has guided nine NORAD and USNORTHCOM commanders through countless posture hearings, briefings, CODEL visits, office calls, phone calls, and numerous other engagements with Members of Congress and our staffs.

Robin's colleagues and her family will tell you that she has always been one of the first leaders at work in the morning, and can often be found at her desk well after standard duty hours. And for Robin, time away from the office has never meant she was off duty. She is never far from her phone or her email in order to ensure commanders and Members of Congress always receive a prompt and professional response to any question, request, or concern. That is one of the reasons why Gen. Glen VanHerck, the current commander of NORAD and USNORTHCOM, has said Robin is "one of the most diligent and dedicated professionals I've had the privilege of serving with over my more than 34 years in uniform. Robin's devotion to our country, homeland defense, and our commands is boundless. She embodies the true meaning of selfless service for a noble cause."

And it is certainly fitting to offer our Nation's sincere thanks to Robin's family for their decades of service and sacrifice. That includes her husband, retired Col. Joe Squatrito, who also served our Nation with honor as an Air Force officer. It also includes their children, Michael and Stacey. As the entire Squatrito family looks forward to the coming new year with limitless opportunities and adventures ahead of them, Robin and Joe are also preparing to take on important new titles and responsibilities as first-time grandparents.

It is my honor to thank Robin Squatrito for her lifetime of devoted service to our Nation. I wish her and her family all the very best in her extraordinarily well-deserved retirement.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### REMEMBERING DR. ROBERT FINBERG

• Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, today I remember and honor Dr. Robert William Finberg, a highly esteemed virologist, researcher, clinician, professor, and resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Dr. Finberg was an example for countless across the Commonwealth.

He was internationally known for his indispensable work on infectious diseases, where he focused much effort on influenza and coronaviruses.

Dr. Finberg received his undergraduate degree from the University of Chicago, after which he pursued his career in infectious disease. He obtained his medical degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine with AOA honors, then went on to complete his internal medicine residency at the New York University School of Medicine. He also completed an Infectious Disease Fellowship at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Dr. Finberg finished his postdoctoral training in the laboratory of Dr. Baruj Benacerraf at Harvard University where he made groundbreaking contributions to immunology. Over the course of his career, he was awarded numerous grants to continue his transformative research.

Dr. Finberg used his experience and expertise to the benefit of the Commonwealth, where he played an instrumental role in protecting our communities from COVID-19. He served in Governor Charlie Baker's COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group and spearheaded research on both COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. He labored heroically to ensure that the public remained informed about the pandemic. His work was unparalleled, and his accomplishments will stand the test of time.

Dr. Finberg also shared his knowledge with those who carry on his legacy. He was an integral member of the UMass Medical School community, where he spent more than 20 years as the chair of the department of medicine. His passion for medicine and educating future healthcare providers is best exemplified by the achievements of his students and the patients who have benefited from their care. Dr. Finberg was a dedicated medical professional, mentor, and advocate.

Dr. Finberg cherished time with his family and friends and will be remembered for his warmth, compassion, and curiosity. He deeply impacted the lives of those around him. His service to his community, the Commonwealth, and the country will never be forgotten.●

##### TRIBUTE TO ARRIS JOHNSON

• Mr. MORAN. Madam President, today I would like to recognize the birthday of Dr. Arris Johnson. Mr. Johnson is a lifetime Kansan and a personal friend who has reached the remarkable milestone of turning 100 years old this past weekend.

Dr. Johnson was born on November 28, 1921, and attended grade school in Decatur County. He never strayed far from his roots attending college at Fort Hays State University and graduate school at Kansas State University. He still resides in Hays with his wife, Virginia.

Just 6 weeks before his graduation from Fort Hays State, he was called to

serve our Nation. In 1945, Dr. Johnson enlisted and served in the Elbe River region for the U.S. Army during World War II. It was his work in the Red Cross division that began his interest in teaching and counseling work.

Following his service, Dr. Johnson returned to Kansas and continued his education, receiving his master's from Kansas State University before returning to Fort Hays State to teach counseling for nearly three decades.

After retiring in 1985, he was named the freemason grandmaster for the State of Kansas. Additionally, Dr. Johnson was further honored with the Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes individuals who have demonstrated a continuing concern for humanity; support spiritual, cultural, and educational objectives; and exemplify the highest standards of character. These characteristics could not describe Dr. Johnson more appropriately.

Dr. Johnson is a loving husband to his wife Virginia Johnson, and they will celebrate their 75th anniversary in January with their family and friends. They continue to reside in Hays, KS, where I hope they enjoy many more years together.

It is clear to everyone that knows Dr. Johnson that he has made the most of his 100 years. His contributions to Kansas and our Nation are worthy of commendation. A beloved husband, father, grandfather, and soldier, Arris is a tribute to the "Greatest Generation," and a grateful Nation and State thank him for his service.

I ask that my colleagues join me in wishing a happy birthday to Arris and a profound thank you for his work in our community. His exemplary service to America and his local community is emblematic of what makes America a great Nation.●

##### REMEMBERING BRUCE CORWIN

• Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to celebrate the life and mourn the passing of Bruce Corwin, a pillar of the sports and entertainment industries, a dedicated philanthropist, and a dear friend.

Born and raised in California, Bruce believed deeply in the power of people. As a college student at Wesleyan, he traveled to Baltimore to march alongside Martin Luther King, Jr., and he protested fraternity discrimination by starting a new, inclusive group. After graduating in 1962, he participated in the Coro Fellows Program for aspiring public servants, the start of a lifelong relationship with Coro through which Bruce supported generations of civic leaders.

Bruce made his career at Metropolitan Theaters, his family's business, which brought English- and Spanish-language movies to theaters across the Southwest. He was the third generation of his family to oversee the company, and he led it with passion for 40 years. Bruce extended his leadership into the community, where he was